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THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



Volume X • Number 7



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Volume X; Number 7

May 1992

William E. Olson, Editor • 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235



Miscellaneous Matter



I am sorry this issue is a few weeks late: it has been an extremely busy spring for me, including, but not limited to, my No. 2 Son's graduation from college (but not his departure from the Parental Payroll) and the necessity of loading up all his stuff and carting it home, along with the annual necessity of cleaning up my yard, fussing with grass, etc., etc. And — in case I need to remind anyone again — I do have a Real Job, for which I get paid and which has a way of making considerable demands on my time. Many members tell me "I don't know how you do it." Well, I'm not sure how I do it either, but it appears that I am always on the ragged edge of not getting it done, and interruptions of only a day or two can have devastating effects.

As of this writing, I am not sure what this issue will have in it, or whether what is in it will be worth a second look. A few members did come through with some material I thought worthwhile, but there is still a lack of stuff for future issues, and my plea, or threat, or whatever it was, is hereby repeated. I have been doing this for eight years now, and although I have gotten better at it with the passage of time, that passage of time has — as seems inevitably to happen with many things we all do — decreased my tolerance for frustration and increased my susceptibility to losing interest sufficiently to pack it in. Your help is needed on a continuing basis: I am not Zeus.

This issue will reach you too late for any further talk about the Club Meet and Tour in Michigan to be useful. As of May 10, the number of people signed up was not terribly encouraging, but the events will go on regardless. Considerable effort necessarily goes into planning and implementing these events; whether we can continue to hold them for a level of participation well below 10% is a question.

* * * * *

• FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS IN 1980 •



• COVERS •



FRONT COVER: Paul Culp (#508) took this shot of his '38 Century during the Club's tour to Malabar Farm in Ohio in September 1989.

BACK COVER: You may have seen pictures of this car before. It has appeared in at least two different guises: the one you see here, and with a faux Rolls-Royce grille. The body is by Fernandez & Darrin of Paris, done on a 1938 80-series chassis. The car is pictured on page 177 of Seventy Years of Buick with its Rolls front, incorrectly, according to its present owner, identified as a Limited. Apparently the Rolls grille was put on it some time after the body was originally made in France. The present owner, Roy Warshawsky of Chicago, Illinois, restored the car to its original appearance with '38 Buick grille and hood. Those pieces, plus the bumpers, fender and tail lamps, headlight pods, and maybe the wheels, some of the front fenders, and some of the sidemount covers, are the only Buick constituents of the body. There is a removable canvas or leather top over the chauffeur's compartment. The car is now painted dark blue with an applied "canework" panel on each side. It is believed that the car was shown at the 1938 Paris Auto Show, where it was purchased by the Countess de Palaski, who brought it to the U.S. and used it for many years before giving it to her nephew, who sold it to a collector in 1968. (Thanks to David Bylsma (#117), who obtained a photo of the car from Mr. Warshawsky.)

Several people have sent me material that is simply too poor in image quality to use. This includes fuzzy and faint photocopies, photocopies that are full of dark smears, copies of copies of copies, copies of photographs, etc. One cannot merely run material through the average office or "quick-copy store" machine and necessarily come up with something that can later be photo-offset into legible copy. The photocopies that I do use are very carefully made on a top-quality xerox copier, and even at that the final result is not always as good as I would wish. I must live with the limitations of photo-offset printing: printed matter must be reasonably clear, sharp and uniform, and illustrations must be either line drawings, half-tones (those millions of tiny dots), or excellent photocopies of half-tones. Poorer quality than that is simply not worth using, and I have no way of turning lead into gold. If you have sent me stuff and never seen it, that may well be the reason. I much prefer to get an original or something; I will return it to you promptly.

* * * * *

While I am in a complaining mood, let us have at one other item: telephone calls. There is nothing in the dues structure to pay for a lot of long-distance calls, so if I make them either: (a) I pay for them myself; or (b) my employer pays for them. Every month I get a printout of all my office calls, and if there is any significant amount of non-business telephone time, I am expected to cough up the price. This is only fair: the company's customers or stockholders do not expect to pay for me to talk about old cars on the phone. And I assume it may go without saying that Ohio Bell expects me to pay for using my home phone.

I do not mind your calling me at the office or at home, but if I am not in when you call, do not be annoyed if I do not call you back. Instead, try to find out when I am expected, and call me again. I do not wish to seem petty about this, and no one ought to get excited about a couple of dollars here or there, but the dollars have a way of adding up, and I will appreciate your cooperation.

Sometimes people call and ask me where to find something; not infrequently, it is some very obscure or hard-to-find part. I will help you if I can, but the chances are at least 50-50 that I will have no better idea than you. (I might add that the chances are 100% that neither my wife nor my secretary will know where to find it, so don't ask them.) As I have said many times before, if you need something, send me a "Wanted" ad. That will expose you to 400-plus people who might have it or know where to find it, not just me. "Wanted" ads work. Try it.

* * * * *



Doug Nelson (#51) sent me this photo, which he found while browsing through an antique shop. The car appears to be a Century, although it is hard to tell for sure, and the license plate appears to say "Washington 1937." As such pictures were usually taken when the car was new, we can assume this one dates to the winter of 1937. The identity of the bespectacled gentleman must of course remain a mystery. I wonder if his wife made sure he wore his rubbers when he went out that day.



Harry Logan (#651) has a car being restored by Dave Lewis, and Harry went east to visit his car — and Dave. On the way back to California, Harry stopped at a place in St. Louis that, he says, specializes in restoration of, and dealing in, very upscale classic vehicles — V-16 Cadillacs and the like. They had at the time a beautifully-restored 1938 Roadmaster four-door convertible. (It is not clear who the owner of the '38 is.) Harry got a chance to take it out for a little spin, even though the weather was then a bit chilly. "It drove like a dream," Harry says, "but it was something driving with the top down in 32-degree weather." Here it is, painted Botticelli Blue, with blue leather interior and tan top.



Shortly after the last issue came out, I received a letter from Frank Wrenick (#25), which he says he wrote (on April 12) to avoid working on his income tax return. That part of Frank's letter that deals with his car appears elsewhere herein. The balance raises an interesting question — is the Club Roster worth all the time, effort, money and continual bashing of heads against walls that goes into it? I have always assumed that a reasonably-current Roster is a useful thing, that the great majority of members would want one, and that the money and head-bashing are thus justified. Make no mistake; there is no joy in compiling a roster: it is tedious, boring, and not-infrequently exasperating work from start to finish, made more so by the repeated failure of some members to take five minutes per year to provide the requested information in legible form. Even my printer does not like it much — but he gets paid and I don't, and Jim Flack, Steve Weinstein and the other members who have worked on rosters over the years don't -or didn't — either.

Here is an excerpt from Frank Wrenick's letter, in which he discusses his own experience with the AMC Rambler Club.

"I commiserate with you on the failure of members to send in worth while stuff for publication. And, for their failure to act promptly, or even reasonably so, when it comes to registering for meets. (Then, when they show up at the meet and wonder why they can't get into the sold out banquet etc., they're really miffed.) As for the Roster, we have shared the same experience.

Elaine and I founded and have been running the AMC Rambler Club since 1980. We have put out a quarterly publication for going on 13 years at this point. We have also handled all the membership registration matters, Roster, Parts Source Guide, and we have personally been responsible for putting on about half of the meets. I think that you and we share some sort of genetic defect that impells us to continue plugging along when anyone with two brain cells to rub together would never have started it at all, much less kept at it for this long. Our publication runs 40 pages and the Roster, when it went out, hit 80 pages. I pass along something we found about Rosters. Only 2% really care about them! So, we stopped putting them out. We offered them (at a reasonable price) on the basis that enough people would have to send in \$5 for one. Out of well over 1,000 members, we got 50 checks. It ain't worth it cost-wise or time-wise. So, we just send out listings of new members with each publication."

Well, this was a bit of an eye-opener. If only 2% of you, or even only 20%, find the Club Roster significant or worthwhile, then it is likely going to be scrapped, because it involves too much grubby work to please only a small minority of members.

The latest Roster cost about \$720 to print and about \$440 to mail, a total of \$1,160 or about \$2.64 per member. It will be easy enough to cut it out and reduce the dues by \$2.50 or \$3.00 per year.

In fact, it is quite possible that the dues can be reduced for the membership year beginning next September 1 in any event. The membership has been slowly but steadily increasing in size, and at this point there are approximately 440 paid members. When I established the present dues structure a few years ago, I based it on 375 members. Adding 65 more members creates a modest economy of scale: the incremental cost of serving each additional member is less than he or she pays in dues. This is so primarily because the single greatest expense is printing, and a considerable portion of the printing cost is in set-up, which is the same however many copies are done.

The last nine Torque Tube issues cost a total of \$8,986 to print, including stuffing the envelopes and other miscellaneous costs. As noted above, printing the Roster cost \$720, making the aggregate \$9,706. Each piece mailed to a U.S. address requires 98¢ in postage; thus the aggregate in postage for nine issues plus the Roster for 440 members is \$4,312 ($$.98 \times 10 \times 440$). Adding that to \$9,706 gives \$14,018, or \$31.86 per member. (This analysis ignores the fact that mailing to locations outside the U.S. costs more, but dues for Canada and overseas locations were established by adding the incremental postage cost to the U.S. dues and rounding off to the nearest dollar, so this really does not matter.)

The foregoing suggests that in pegging the annual dues at \$32 I was right on target. However, the Club receives revenue from commercial advertisers of roughly \$800 per year and interest on its bank account (net of bank charges) of roughly \$300 per year, or roughly \$2.50 per year per member.

At present, we have in the bank some \$8,900. This and the next two issues to come out before the end of the membership year on August 31 will consume about \$4,400 of that, leaving \$4,500. There are 50 members who have paid through August 31, 1993 and 27 who have paid through August 31, 1994. Thus 104 member-years must be covered by that balance, and that will use up somewhere between \$3,100 and \$3,350 of it, leaving a "surplus" of around \$1,200, give or take a hundred or so one way or another. At least some of that will be needed for a new supply of Club decals and other miscellaneous expenses, so it probably should be left in place.

If we assume that dues can be decreased by \$2.50 or so effective September 1, 1992, eliminating the Roster could push the decrease to about \$5.00. Irrespective of that, however, if most of you do not find the Roster of some significant usefulness, very serious consideration should be given to discontinuing it, because, as noted earlier, it involves a good deal of tedious effort. Jim Flack and I are willing to continue that effort, if the membership wants it. It may be that we can eventually come to a point where the work can be more easily accomplished, but it will still be work. I find the Roster helpful, but I can live without it.

I would like everyone to think about this and let me know your thoughts. If I receive a statistically significant body of response, I will act on it.



WEST COAST CLUB TOUR

There will not be a separate West Coast Club Meet this year, as there has been in the past; one major problem, I gather, has been to find something new that people can afford — or at least are willing to pay for. However, there will be a one-day Club Tour in conjunction with the "All GM Central Coast Fun Run" hosted by the BCA Orange County Chapter, to be held August 28-30 at the historic Santa Maria Inn, Santa Maria, California. This is a "casual non-competitive event centered around fun, family and friendship." The entire event will feature a swap meet, car corral, a rally/tour to the wineries of Santa Barbara County and a Saturday night pool-side barbeque. The '37/'38 tour will take place on Sunday, and participants will go to McClintock's, which I assume is a restaurant, for lunch. For further information, contact Bill or Karren Schaeffer (#622), 2681 Riverside Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. 714/631-1912 or 714/540-7543.

The following reprint of an article from the English paper *The Observer* provides an interesting postscript to the last issue's discussion of rear end ratios and cruising speeds. Note that the author is delighted with the Buick "Viceroy's" high-speed performance. As I said, it's largely a matter of what one is used to. The average English driver of the 1930s was doubtless used to small, noisy four-cylinder cars that were probably flat-out at 5000 RPM at 70 MPH.

Reprinted from the
Evening Standard

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 1938

MOTOR NOTES

BY ROBERT WALLING

MANY a motorist might think that a new owner of the new Buick Viceroy saloon (£510 — tax £23 5s. — 31 h.p.), 16ft. 8in. long and nearly 6ft. wide—would take several weeks to get used to its size in traffic and to its vivid acceleration on the open road. Low-gear steering might give extra justification for the view.

I tested it last week-end through the courtesy of Lendrum and Hartman, Ltd., of 26 Albemarle-street, W.1 the sole concessionaires.

The car handled with the neatness of a small sports production and with about one per cent. of a sports car's usual noise.

In traffic it scored because getaway was certain, smooth and rapid, on a clutch that had none of that prevalent too-long travel which is apt to bring a driver's left knee to a point near his chin. Steering, because it was low-gear, allowed accurate manoeuvring in the West End, aided by the low placing of the steering wheel (helping to improve vision).

TO 90 M.P.H. IN A FEW SECONDS

On main roads in the country the model swept from 30 m.p.h. (in top) to about 90 m.p.h. in a few seconds, the steering wheel placid in my hands and the top of the bonnet quite steady. There were only two signs of the speed being maintained—the countryside sliding up to the car and the throb of the air stream on the windscreen.

For anything from fast to sedate touring I found it a waste of time to attempt to use the gears so long as speed in top did not fall below 20 m.p.h.

I expected the model to roll. The faster it was driven the quicker some slight side-sway disappeared. Above 35 m.p.h. there was no tail-whip or side-roll, and no rear-end chatter. Passengers commented on this feature.

Reason: rear, spiral springs which are freed from twisting effects by a rigid torque tube enclosing the transmission shaft, and are controlled by a clever type of shock absorber. This resulted in a soft but stable ride for rear passengers.

TENDENCY TO ROLL STOPPED

The front end had spiral springs too, but these operated independently with a "knee-action," and were governed by a stabiliser rod whose resistance to twist stopped tendency to roll. (Note: spiral springs do not require the constant attention of the leaf-type, and have no shackles to wear slack.)

Hydraulic brakes suited the type of suspension, and at speed gripped the car firmly but not harshly. The handbrake was convenient.

Six passengers were given plenty of room, and the luggage accommodation, unencumbered by two spare wheels (mounted at the sides), was among the best I have seen. The floor of the rear compartment was flat, due to a hypoid rear axle.

The car started readily after standing all night in a cold garage, the accelerator-pedal form of self-starter being a refreshing change.

The model struck me as a bright result of constant and intense scientific study of the advancing needs of modern motorists.

Sole Concessionaires: LENDRUM & HARTMAN, LTD.,
BUICK HOUSE, ALBEMARLE ST., LONDON, W.1. Telephone Regent 2771

'WILLIAM'



By Frank Wrenick (#25)

Elaine and I purchased "William," our 1938 Buick Special four-door trunk back sedan, in 1969. It was our first antique car, and perhaps our first big mistake. We now have 20 cars, live in a big city suburb and have them sprinkled all over the place in garages both rented and owned. It is not satisfactory, but has to do until I can afford to buy a close-in farm or something. William came to us via a middle-man who purchased the car from a New York school teacher - yes, a little old lady. It still had the sun visor clip-on mirror for primping before exiting the car at school. Yes, the mirror is still where we found it, on the driver's side sun visor. The car had about 50,000 miles in 1969 and now is around 73,000. It's gray and in very decent original condition. I've thought about restoring William, but then, it wouldn't be original. I did have it painted once - a lousy job - and the chrome has been done, but that was twenty years ago. I also recently bought original-style running board rubber and running boards but they are sitting in the basement because I can't bring myself to change the car. It runs wonderfully and never overheats, even in 100° weather. It's a delight to drive and always wows them when we drive it around. Trips are no problem. Just jump in and go. No special preparations at all. I do throw some gasoline additive in once in a while but never drive fast or hard. The best thing I ever did to William was install an NOS Century ring and pinion some years ago. Cruises great but is a little short of power on steep hills now. The upholstery is original and very nice, except for a one-inch-sized moth hole at the top of the front seat back. The headliner is sort of sagging but that's what gives it the old-time feeling, and smell. Wouldn't trade William for anything. Probably won't change him for anything either. I like to see a perfectly restored '38 Buick, but

I enjoy driving something comfortable that I don't have to worry about. Just because he's a little worn doesn't mean we don't love him just as much.



CAR ART

I received a letter from a guy who does oil paintings of antique cars. He says he makes the paintings from photographs, and will give complete instructions to the owner as to the type or style of photos needed. Satisfaction is guaranteed; if you don't like it, you don't pay. I probably would have put this letter in File 13 if he had not enclosed a photo of one of his paintings. It looked damn good. There was no mention of price. If you are interested, contact

Michael L. Hish
6175 Chimney Dr.
Sun Valley, NV 89433
702/673-1389

1938 "APPROVED ACCESSORIES"

The following page is taken from an issue of The Buick Magazine, and shows some of the popular accessories sold by Buick dealers. This shows a "sharktooth" grille guard similar to the 1937 grille guard, which has a different shape. The "BUICK 8" bumper badge or "monogram," not shown on this presentation, is listed in the Master Chassis Parts Book, which suggests that it was installed on some cars at the factory, whereas the "sharktooth" probably was dealer-installed.

Approved Accessories for 1938

Developed by Buick engineers, built to Buick's high standard of quality, these items further amplify the comfort, safety, and pride of Buick ownership

There's a place on your 1938 Buick for every one of these luxurious accessories, and when you have achieved the happy combination of Buick and Buick accessories there'll be a place in your heart

for both. Buick accessories are not added extras; they are integral parts of the comfort, safety, and beauty of the car. You'll be delighted to have them on your new Buick. See them at your dealer's today.



Master heater



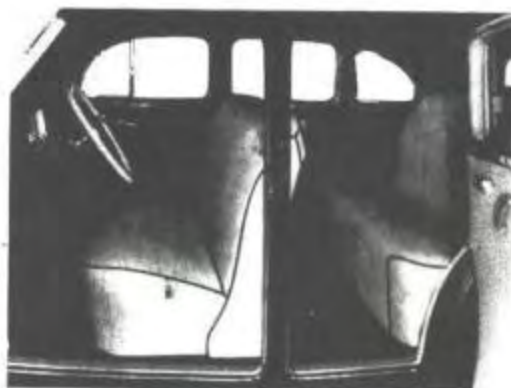
De Luxe heater and optional defroster



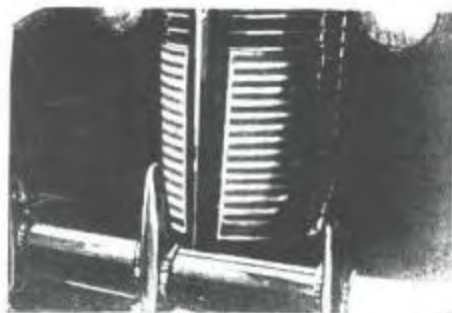
Centerline radio, with single or dual speakers



Grille guard

Comfortable, durable, and delightfully good looking—
De Luxe Moderne seat covers

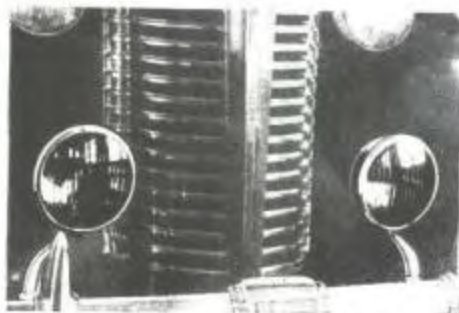
Rear center guard



Twin grille covers



Exhaust pipe trim



Fog lamps

All available at your Buick dealer's, all economically priced

Your copy of **THE BUICK MAGAZINE** has been purchased for you by your Buick dealer. At the address you see on the back cover of this issue, he awaits a chance to serve you in every automotive need: new cars, used cars, service, and accessories.

CORRECTION. On page five of *The Buick Magazine* for October, item number 3 reads, in part: "Because of special design of gear teeth, special hypoid lubricants are not required, standard E P lubricants serving with complete satisfaction." This information should be ignored. Correct recommendations for special hypoid lubricant for use in all 1938 models are included in the 1938 Owner's Manual.

PEGASUS FLIES AGAIN

My father worked for Socony-Vacuum Corporation, or one of its subsidiaries, for some 38 years, selling industrial lubricants. Our house was typically full of sample kits with little jars of grease in them, cans of naphtha, various other solvents, steam cylinder oil, and heaven knows what else that could be derived from petroleum. Everything generally was well-lubricated, and our house got painted with the white paint used on Socony service stations. Thus, I seem to have inherited an interest in the corporation and its products. "Socony" was an acronym for "Standard Oil Company of New York," which was one of the several "Standard" oil companies that were spun out of the break-up of Rockefeller's Standard Oil "trust." The name is not used publicly any more; the main corporation became Socony-Mobil some time ago, and is now Mobil Oil. When my father was pushing its products — which, incidentally, got him a "C" gas rationing status during the Big War — the gasoline was trade-named "Mobil gas" and the lubricants, by and large "Gargoyle," which might have been a play on the word "oil". The Mobil gas signs featured the "Flying Red Horse," taken from Pegasus, the flying horse of Greek mythology. The following copy, taken from a Socony ad of the mid-1930s, tells how "Pegasus flies again." One wonders how many people today would regard Mobil — or any other oil company — as a "great American institution."

How the Winged Horse of Ancient Greece became the Symbol of a Modern American Institution

SO SWIFT that his speed was matched only by that of the imagination — so powerful that no deed of man or the gods was beyond him, Pegasus stood alone, unexampled and unrivalled, in the mythology of the ancient Greeks.

Today, a modern Pegasus rides the skies.

Portrayed in flaming red, his likeness dots the highways as the symbol of a great American institution... the Socony-Vacuum Corporation.

Specifically, this new Pegasus is the trade-mark of Mobilgas, a quality gasoline. Just as the famous trade-mark of Gargoyle Lubricants stands the world over for the finest in oils, the winged horse marks the place, on highway and thoroughfare, where American motorists can secure the finest in motor fuels.

But Pegasus also stands for the whole broad scope of the Corporation's activities.

He represents a service to industry combining the finest in lubricants with specialized knowledge of their application.

He stands for an army of 50,000 men, constantly at work in the service of both industry and the motoring public.

You can rely on the products identified by this modern Pegasus. You can rely on the service that goes hand in hand with these products. Pegasus flies again, a symbol that all can trust.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY OF NEW YORK, INC.
VACUUM OIL COMPANY, INC.
WADHAMS OIL COMPANY
WHITE STAR REFINING COMPANY
LUBRITE REFINING CORPORATION
WHITE EAGLE OIL CORPORATION
MAGNOLIA PETROLEUM COMPANY
GENERAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION OF CALIFORNIA



**IT COVERS ROUGH GOING WITH THE
CUSHIONED PROWL OF THE PANTHER**



BUYER'S DIGEST
OF THE 1938 BUICK

- * NEW DYNAFLEX VALVE-IN-HEAD STRAIGHT-8 ENGINE
- * NEW TORQUE-FREE SPRINGING
- * TORQUE-TUBE DRIVE
- * NEW QUIET ZONE BODY MOUNTING
- * ANOLITE PISTONS
- * AEROFAT CARBURETOR
- * NEW BULL-EYE STEERING
- * TIPODE HYDRAULIC BRAKES
- * KNEE ACTION FRONT SPRINGING
- * UNITEEL BODY BY FULLER
- * BUILT-IN DEFROSTER CONNECTIONS

NO OTHER CAR IN THE WORLD
HAS ALL THESE FEATURES



One ride will show you why **TORQUE-FREE SPRINGING**, and the new **DYNAFLASH ENGINE**, make the 1938 Buick the most modern chassis in the world

THE seat fits you, that's the first thing. It's broad and deep, and it's pitched right, and there's a high comfortable roll back of your shoulders and behind your head.

You look out past the driver in front of you, out over that long graceful bonnet—there is no neck-strain; looking any way, to front or to side, you can see.

Then there's the feel of sound and secure construction all around you, steel fused on steel, strength knit to silence, the whole borne on a chassis that's taut and firm and finished as a cup defender.

But it's when you hit the rough going, the rutted road, the railway crossings, the cobbled paving, the "wash-board" gravel, that this wondrous new 1938

Buick shows you what science can do with a *ride!*

Under you now is something fresh and tireless and new in automotive design, not the old-type leaf spring of yore, but the great soft coils of shock-smothering TORQUE-FREE SPRINGING.

As the beautifully poised car streams onward under the spur of the amazing DYNAFLASH engine, the wheels may dip and curtsy but the body rides true and level as a flung lance.

You sit *in* the cushions, relaxed and rested. You're safer—skid risks are blessedly reduced. You save money—rear tires last measurably longer. And the whole eager car handles with a sureness, a "directability" never before attained.

Please don't stop with admiring the new Buick. Know what DYNAFLASH power and the lullaby ride of TORQUE-FREE SPRINGING mean, by sampling them first-hand on the highway.

WHEN
BETTER AUTOMOBILES
ARE BUILT BUICK
WILL BUILD THEM

"Better buy Buick!"

A GENERAL MOTORS VALUE



TECHNICAL TIPS



RESTORING HEADLIGHT REFLECTORS

There is good news for those of us who may venture to use their cars after dark. UVIRA is again offering its headlight reflector restoration service to the antique car owner. This process consists of the application of a coating of aluminum to the reflector followed by vacuum-evaporation of a microthin layer of pure silica glass over the aluminum. The result is a surface equal in reflectance to freshly-deposited silver, but which will never tarnish. UVIRA guarantees that the coating will maintain at least 90% reflectivity for five years, but by all accounts I have ever read, the coating will last forever unless it is traumatically damaged.

Before the advent of sealed-beam lamps in 1940, headlight, fog, and driving lamp reflectors were plated with silver. That was because, of all feasibly-available surfaces, polished silver reflects the most light — about 90%. However, as we know, silver tarnishes on exposure to air, and as the tarnish progresses, reflectivity declines. Mild tarnishing can often be removed with ammonia, but the use of silver polish or rouge is eventually necessary, and repeated applications of even a mildly-abrasive polish eventually wear the silver plating away, or roughen it to the point where reflectivity is significantly diminished. (The tarnishing process itself uses up the silver gradually.)

Buick headlight design (and presumably that of other makes as well) attempted to minimize reflector deterioration by the use of a cork gasket between the lens assembly and the reflector and "bucket." This was intended to minimize exchange of air between the interior and exterior of the lamps, as well as to dampen movement of the parts and prevent rattles. It worked to a degree, but obviously an air-tight seal is not possible. These gaskets are often missing or deteriorated on unrestored cars. Replacements can be obtained from member Mac Blair (#857).

At their best, headlights of the pre-sealed-beam era were not the equal of modern halogen lamps. Beyond that, however, the reasons that many antique cars have dim lights is that (a) the reflectors are tarnished or worn out; or (b) the restorer has — cleverly, he thinks — chrome plated them. Chrome looks beautiful and shiny on bumpers, hubcaps, and the like, but the truth is that it has relatively poor reflectivity compared with polished silver. The latter reflects about 90% of the light that strikes it; the best chrome can do is about 65%. So, chrome your reflectors and you've lost 25% of your lighting capacity right off the bat. There was a reason the manufacturers did not chrome-plate headlight reflectors in the first place. (That level of reflectivity is probably one of the reasons chrome looks so nice as automotive trim: it appears to have depth. Polished silver, by contrast, besides being considerably more expensive, would not look the same.)

All metal surfaces, including chrome and aluminum, tend to oxidize and dull over time, although perhaps not to the same extent and with the same speed as silver. The sealed-beam lamp solved the problem by combining bulb, reflector and lens in one

air-tight package filled with an inert gas. The UVIRA process solves it by the glass coating discussed above.

Cost is \$35 per reflector, including return shipping in the U.S.A.

UVIRA
310 Pleasant Valley Rd.
Merlin, Oregon 97532
503/474-5050

RUNNING BOARD RESTORATION

I have received several questions from newer members on how to restore running boards. We have covered this in the past, but it may be helpful to summarize the past articles into one new one. As with most things, the "fix" one chooses will depend upon: (1) how bad things are to begin with; (2) how much money one is willing to spend; and (3) how close to "show quality" one wants to come.

Running boards are constructed of rubber vulcanized in a mold to a steel "core," which is mounted on the car with brackets. The core has reinforcing members on its underside. If the steel is rusted through, you will need to take the cores to a body repair man who will condescend to work on them for you within a reasonable time — and, let me assure you, finding such a person is no mean feat — and have him remove the old rubber and improvise a repair of the steel.

If the boards are sound, but the rubber is cracked, pitted or otherwise non-presentable, you can try a reasonably-inexpensive fix invented by Lewis Cohen (#584), and first described in Vol. VII, No. 2. Remove the running boards from the car, then clean off, prime, and paint the undersides. On the cracks, splits, holes and/or worn spots in the rubber, use NAPA Seam Sealer No. 4323 (black), which comes in a standard caulking tube. According to Lew, "it flows out nicely, can be easily tooled and wet sanded, and dries in 20 minutes....This is basically an add material, wet sand, add more material process, just as if body filler were being worked with. Wet sand with 220 or 180 and it will blend very nicely." Then, use Plasti-Dip (Black), a liquid-rubber-type solution, to paint the entire board. (Plasti-Dip is made by PDI, Inc., 3760 Flowerfield Rd., Blaine, Minnesota 55434; contact them if you cannot find the product locally.) This stuff may be thinned if necessary with lacquer thinner, and put on with a brush. The final result, according to Lew, is quite good, and the whole job may run under \$50 for materials. Obviously, a fair amount of labor is needed, and you must work carefully and patiently to get a good result.

A second method, for 40-series owners only, is to re-cover the boards with the repro rubber covers sold by Lynn Steele and Bob's Automobilia. These are about \$420/pair. The steel cores must be reconditioned if necessary, and the old rubber stripped off. The new covers are then applied with contact cement. This is a messy, smelly, and semi-tricky process. As you know if you have worked with contact cement before, once you put the two coated parts together, they're stuck forever, so you must position the rubber initially with great care, with a sheet of heavy brown paper between the rubber and the core, except in the area you want to stick first, which typically will be the straight outside edge. Then pull back the paper and press the parts together a little at a time. It helps to have two people doing this. Unfortunately, these covers are not made in one piece, and a section must be spliced in where the rubber curves up under the front door. No matter how carefully done, this will show.

I used the Steele covers in working on a '37 Special I owned several years ago, and the whole business left something to be desired. There is nothing basically wrong with the product; it is just difficult for the amateur to apply successfully. It is especially difficult to get the rubber to curl around the front and back edges and stick in place. In my case, the cores for some reason seemed an inch or two too short, which compounded the difficulty immensely. I never did figure out why this was so, but there may be other cars with these "short" boards, so you should test-fit the covers carefully before proceeding to put them on permanently. You should also have some experience in working with contact cement.

As with most things, the highest-quality job demands the most money and the least effort on your part. A magnificent, show-quality job of running board restoration is done by

Hundley Acuff
1423 Wilson Road
Rossville, Georgia 30741.

Write to him for prices and shipping instructions, with SASE. (Hundley does not like telephone calls.) The rubber is vulcanized to the steel core just as in the original; thus you must send the cores. Hundley will remove the old rubber, for an extra charge. Some series are too large for UPS, and must be crated and shipped by truck. Cost will run between \$500 and \$1,000 depending upon the series, the amount of work required, and the shipping charges. Hundley did the running boards on my present '37 Roadmaster, and this is one feature of the car that I am often asked about. They look terrific. If you have a 60, 80, or 90-series car and cannot, or do not wish to, get by with the "Lewis Cohen fix," or if you want the best possible result on a 40-series car, Hundley Acuff is the only way to go. God knows what will happen if he ever decides to retire, or dies.

Restored running boards should be kept clean, and treated periodically with Armor All. There are many reasons to keep your car out of direct sunlight as much as possible, and running board restoration is one of them. Even a Hundley Acuff job will begin to weather and crack if exposed to too much ultraviolet light.

WHY DO OLD CARS OVERHEAT: MY OPINION

By Don Micheletti (#250)

The subject of overheating seems to come back again and again. My general philosophy is that Buick built a damn good car and they wouldn't be here if these cars overheated then, as badly as many seem to now. In the many years I have been working with antique cars I have ALWAYS found that if something doesn't work right it is usually because you do not understand how it is supposed to work, or you have missed an important detail of your fix.

In all the articles on overheating, there is one item I have never seen mentioned - mechanical removal of scale from the water passages.

Here is what I mean. The cooling system of an automobile is a bit like a boiler. You fill it with water, which always has some dirt, dissolved minerals, and the like in it, and then slowly evaporate the water, then you add some more water - with more dirt, etc. etc. The water evaporates but the dirt stays - settles in the bottom of the block and gets hard.

When I rebuild an old engine I have found boiling alone is not the answer. I always remove the core plugs (freeze plugs), water jacket or whatever encloses the water passages in the engine. By working through these holes I scrape the built-up crud from around the cylinders, between the cylinders and particularly from the bottom of the water passages. My '38 had 110,000 miles on it when I cleaned it out. I got about half of a 5-gallon bucket of scale, dirt and general crud from out of the water passages of the engine. That is a lot of stuff which would inhibit cooling!

I also had the radiator "rodded". That is - remove the top and bottom reservoirs and run a rod down all the tubes to remove the scale and crud. A good radiator shop will do this. It is more expensive than just a boilout - but worth it.

I did this on the '38 (I had other problems with a poorly rebuilt pump - written in an earlier article). This car has a 180 degree thermostat in it and it runs all day, hot or cold weather, up hills and down and at 65 miles per hour at 180 degrees! I put antifreeze and water in the car in 1986 and I haven't added to it since (nor have I changed it - bad boy!). I know a lot of people will not believe this - but it is true.

Oh yes, the car is driven - it is not a museum piece.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Very good advice. One way to inhibit the formation of scale inside your engine's water passages is to use only distilled water. Even if your home water is not especially "hard," it is still likely to have some dissolved minerals or other deposit-forming stuff in it. Around here, anyway, distilled water is easily obtainable in any large food market in gallon jugs at reasonable prices. (For reasons known only to her, my wife drinks no other waters, and our house is full of such jugs.) Another helpful measure is the addition of "Nalcool 3000" cooling system conditioner. This is made for heavy-duty trucks and is highly recommended by those of our members who are truck drivers or mechanics. You should be able to find it at places that sell truck parts or equipment. A considerable body of opinion holds that if you do not need to worry about freezing temperatures, it is better to use plain water (with a conditioner such as Nalcool or the old-fashioned "rust inhibitor" added) than a water-ethylene glycol ("permanent" anti-freeze) mix. Modern cars must use such a mix year 'round because they routinely run at temperatures in the 200-degree and up range, and the boiling point of the mix is much higher than the boiling point of water. If the coolant temperature in a 50-or-60-year-old car goes about 210 there is a problem, whether the coolant boils or not. Your engine should run a bit cooler on plain water, because it has a greater capacity for absorbing and dissipating heat than a water-ethylene glycol mix. However, Don Micheletti is quite right: if the water passages in your block and radiator are partially or completely plugged with scale, you will have overheating problems no matter what you put in the radiator.

One of our long-time commercial advertisers is Bob's Automobilia. From his beginning in New Jersey several years ago through his move to California, Bob has continually expanded and improved his product line. I recently received a copy of Bob's new catalog effective March 1992, and urge everyone to get one (see Bob's ad in this issue); some new products that you need may have been added.

REBUILDING '38 REAR SHOCKS
Don Micheletti

The article a few months ago about '38 rear shocks was quite good, and in reality, replacing the originals with modern shocks is probably a good move -they are, no doubt, much better.

However, if you are like me, you would rather have the original troublesome shocks, for the sake of authenticity.

The fact is, rebuilding the originals is not that hard if you have or can make a few tools.

The '38 repair manual does a very good job of describing the procedure. However the special tools are probably not available and the replacement parts do not exist.

The special tools are easy to duplicate and the seals that must be replaced can be substituted by modern parts available from a bearing supplier- I used Motion Industries and they have distributors all over the country.

Naturally your originals must be re-buildable. If they are hopelessly rusty or sound like they have sand and gravel in them, or have a lot of side slop in them, you are probably out of luck. But, if they are smooth in their action and are not rusted together, you may be able to rebuild them.

My car had 110,000 miles on it when I did the shocks and I think they were the originals. There was nothing wrong with them except the seals were shot and there was a lot of gunk inside.

I am including a sketch of the major tool (probable duplicate of #J-1117), a wrench which takes the packing nut (#K) off.

Just follow the procedure as it is spelled out in the manual in the disassembly section. You will need a good stable vise to hold the shock - those nuts are tight!

If any of the parts are broken you may be able to salvage them from extra shocks, otherwise - to bad. However if yours are like mine, you are in business.

After disassembly there will be a few variations from the prescribed procedure. You will probably not be changing valves, and the replacement of the rod seal will mean prying the old original leather seal out and replacing it with a modern "lip" seal. I have not spelled it out but the procedure but is straight forward.

What you will have to look for is a bad bronze bushing in part "F", a badly worn rod "D", scored cylinder "O" or badly worn piston "X". If any of these are bad you will probably not be able to repair the shock. I have taken about 6 of these shocks apart and they were all in good condition, except for seals.

Clean all the parts and passages. Be sure the seats are free of pits. If they are slightly pitted you can polish them out using 600 grit wet or dry sandpaper on a flat surface (a window is very flat) with a bit of oil.

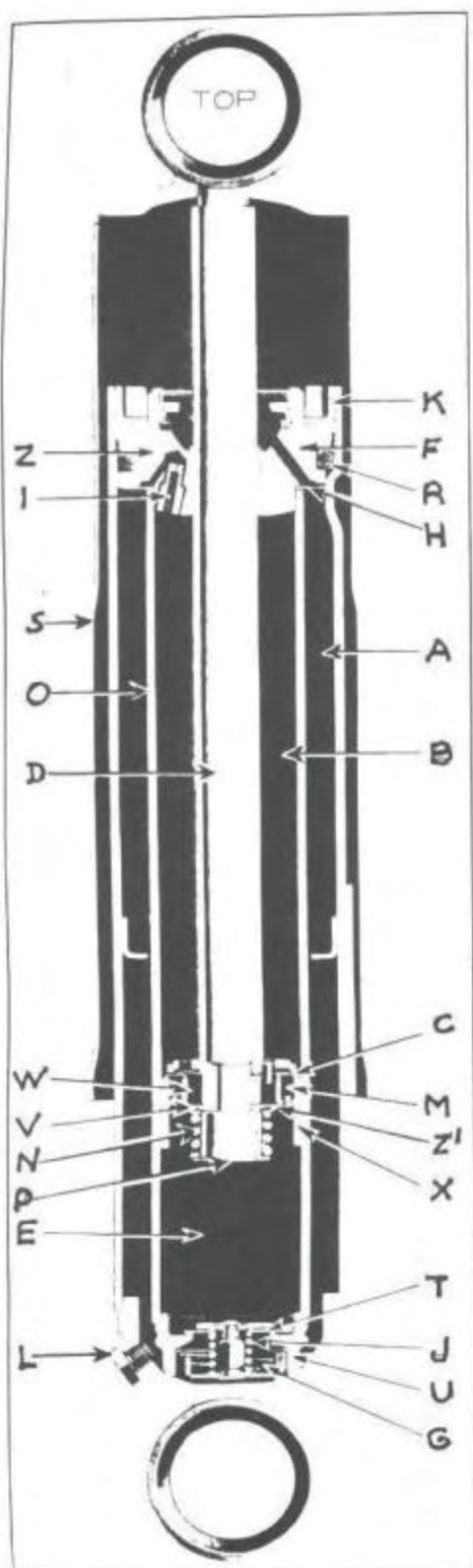


Fig. 3-8. Direct Acting Shock Absorber

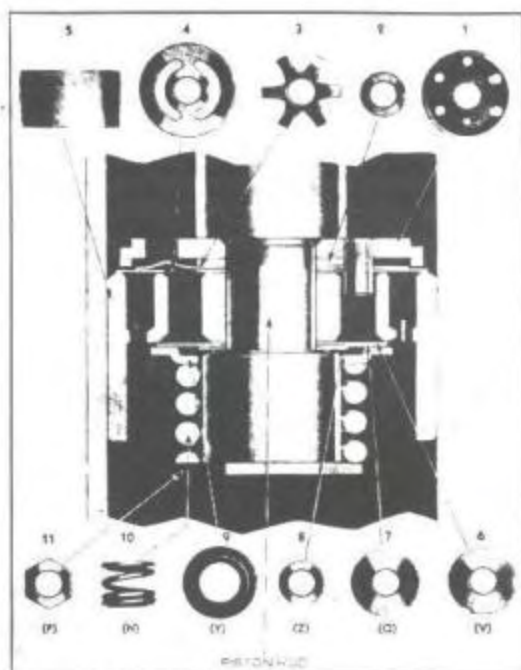


Fig. 3-9. Rear Shock Absorber Rebound Valve Assembly

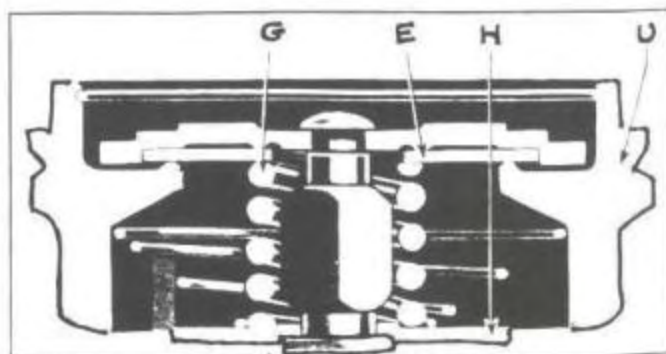


Fig. 3-10. Compression and Intake Valve Assembly

The modification for seals is on part "F". I doubt you could find this as a replacement part. What I have done is pry out the old seal. I found a replacement modern seal which fits right in, and that was all. Unfortunately, when I did this I hadn't planned on writing this article, so I neglected to photograph the procedure or note the seal part number.

It is a bit of a problem getting the packing nut "K" out- you have to be careful and you need a solid vise to hold the ring on the end of the shock. Also gasket "R", a cork affair may be bad. I replaced the cork with an O ring made of Viton.

When you have everything apart it would be a good time to clean and paint the shocks.

The manual mentions the use of a 5/8 socket on nut (R) or "11". A standard 12 point socket will not work. This nut is very thin and you must use a 6 point socket which has had the front, where the hex is, machined so there is no radius - if there is you will round off the nut without getting it off.

You must be careful in reassembly. The new 'O' ring offers resistance and it is very easy to cross thread the "K" nut when you are screwing it down. Be careful to have the key in the body and slot in "F" aligned. When you are done the nut should be flush with the top of the body otherwise you do not have "F" fully seated.

While probably a no-no, I refilled my shocks with automatic transmission oil. They seem to work fine with this oil. There are no rubber parts in the shock which can be affected by this oil and you just replaced the parts which might be.

I did this on my '38 Roadmaster about 7 years ago, and the shocks are just now needing refilling -not really to bad.

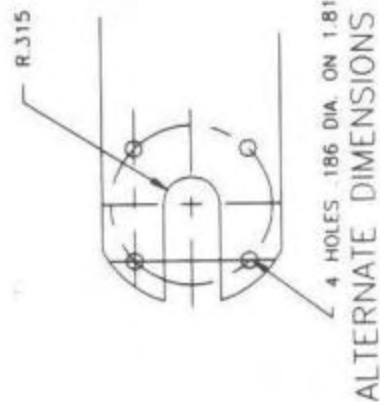
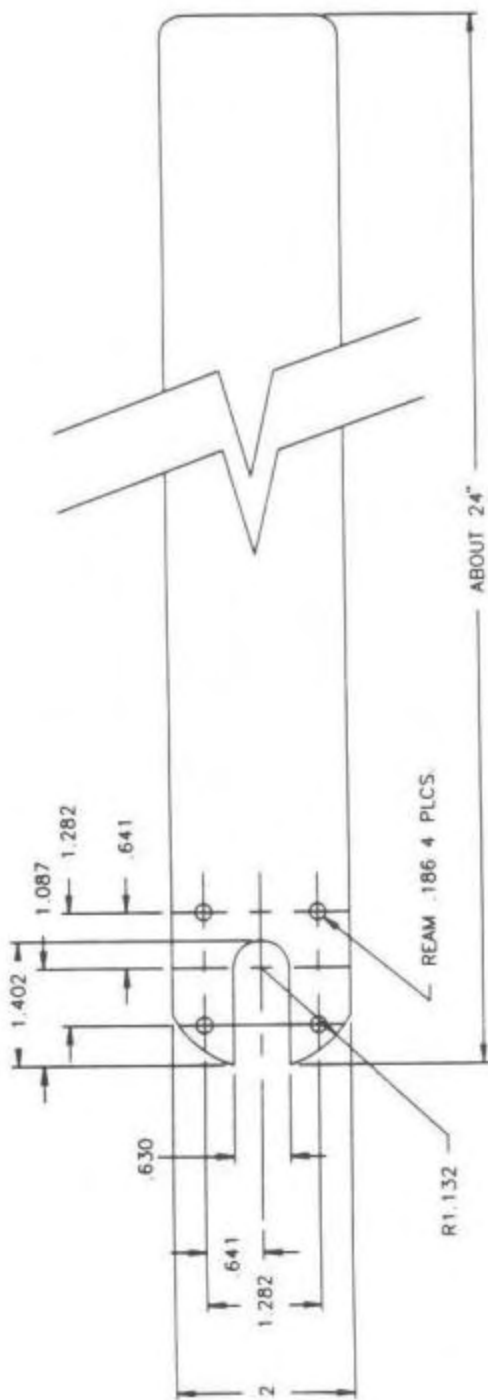
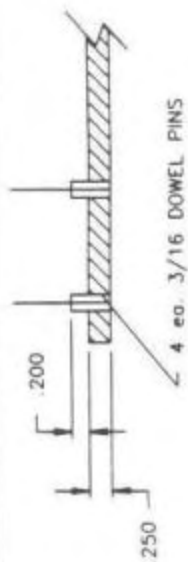
The good part is this is an inexpensive fix and when you are done you still have the original shocks.

The manual says to use a special filling cup. I found a small funnel works fine. The amount of oil still must be accurate.

If anyone wants to borrow my tool I will be glad to lend it to them if they pay the shipping costs. I have no idea what it might be. It weighs a couple of pounds. Of course they have to send it back within a reasonable time.

I have also taken apart the front shocks and rebuilt them. They are a bit harder to do - but not impossible. Maybe some day I will write that up also.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The prior article that Don refers to was a few years ago, not months. It said that '38 rear shocks can be replaced by Monroe Magnum 60#6828.



SHOCK DISASSEMBLY TOOL

MATERIAL: STEEL
DOWEL PINS HARDENED

D. MICHELETTI 4-15-92



QUESTION: According to the article on rear ends in the last issue, the 1937 80 and 90 series cars do not have hypoid rear ends; however, the '37 owner's manual states that we should all use the same "EP" (hypoid) rear end oil. I read an article on "EP" versus non-"EP" lubricants and I am confused. I thought "EP" oil was used only in hypoid rear ends; therefore, what about the series 80 and 90? Based on that article I changed my transmission oil from 80/90-weight general purpose gear oil to Classique SAE 160 (600W) non-EP, for summer use. What lubricants do you use?

ANSWER: First, we need to bear in mind two precepts: (1) modern lubricants are orders of magnitude better and operate satisfactorily over a wider range of temperatures than those available 50 or 60 years ago; (2) there is generally no harm in using a better product than that specified. The 1937 owner's and shop manuals state that EP (extreme pressure) gear lubricant should be used in the rear ends of all 1937 models, and that is what you should do. The spiral bevel gears in 1937 80 and 90 series cars do not have the "hypoid" configuration, but that does not mean that they do not require an extreme-pressure lubricant; nor does the fact that hypoid rear ends require EP lubricant mean that it should not be used in non-hypoid rear ends. If you put 600W or some primitive lubricant intended for Maxwells or Model T Ford into the rear end of any 1937 or 1938 Buick, sure as the sun rises in the east you will wreck your rear end. (I now believe that may well have been what caused the rear end in my '37 Roadmaster to fail. What came out when we took it apart looked very peculiar, and it seems quite possible that a former owner made this mistake — as well as many others.)

You can use 600W (also sometimes known in the past as "steam cylinder oil" and equivalent to SAE 160) in your transmission if you want to, but in my opinion there is no need for this, and you should not use it in cold weather (below about 50 degrees), because the transmission will be hard to shift and may not be adequately lubricated until the stuff is thoroughly warmed up.

I use (or have used) Kendall Three-Star 85W-140 gear lubricant in both rear end and transmission year 'round. There are many comparable products from other refiners, and I see no reason why they should not perform satisfactorily. This type of lubricant is the gear-oil equivalent of multi-viscosity motor oil, and was not available 55 years ago when our owner's manuals were written.

I read somewhere that EP oil should not be used in the transmission, but can't find this reference now in either of the manuals. Such advice was, I believe, based upon the view that the additives in EP oil (sulfur and phosphorous) that give it "extreme-pressure" capability will corrode the bronze bushings, washers, and synchronizer cones. However, I have never heard of anyone having this problem. EP lubricants may tend to turn bronze black, but there is no evidence available to me that they will damage bronze to the point of failure in ordinary antique car use.

If you like to grease your own car (or do it even though you don't like it), any of the multi-purpose grease cartridges available for hand grease guns will work fine for chassis lubrication. The main things here are: (1) make sure the fittings are cleaned off first; and (2) don't overlook any of the grease points — in particular, the clutch and brake pedal shafts, the pitman arm, and the rear springs, all of which are easy to overlook.



Classified Ads



PARTS FOR SALE

1937 & 1938, all series, reproduction center hood strip, stainless steel. Back in stock after a two year absence. These are the hood strips I first began reproducing 10 years ago. Difficulty in obtaining from supplier may result in this item no longer being available after this shipment is sold out. \$160. You must specify the year and model you desire. Please add something for shipping. Edward A. DePouli, 119 Hardenburgh Ave., Demarest, N.J. 07627. Note: Also available through Bob's Automobilia.

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37-38	Series 40 Starter Armature NOS	\$25.00
38	Series 40 Generator (1101852) Tested & Works Good	\$55.00
37	All Series Vacuum Starter Switch NOS (1607)	\$55.00
37-38	All Series AC Fuel Pump Rebuilt	\$35.00
37-38	Series 40 Water Pump Universal Type, Condition Unknown	\$7.00
37	Radio w/ Auxillary Fire Wall Mounted Speaker, Plays Great Everything in Very Good Condition.	\$300.00
38	Series 40 Carb. Stromberg AAV1. Complete w/ Automatic Choke and Vacuum Starter Switch. Needs Rebuilding, Correct Rebuilding Kit Included.	\$240.00
37	Shocks Series 40-60 Front & Rear (1947A, 1947B Fronts) (1913A, 1913B Rears) Need Rebuilding	\$5.00/ea.
38	Shocks Series 40-60 (Fronts 1947A, 1947B) Need Rebuilding	\$5.00/ea.
37	Fender Parking Light (1 Only)	\$35.00
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Please Send S.A.S.E for Reply or Call Between 5:30 pm and 10:00 pm CENTRAL TIME or anytime on weekends. SHIPPING EXTRA ON ALL PARTS.

George Peska #68
2010 Prairie Ave.
Downers Grove, IL 60515
(708) 964-1613

PARTS WANTED

Need back seat foot rest bar for '37 series 80/90; also front stabilizer bar. BRUCE BARRETT (#836). 1945 Mc Donald, Missoula, MT 59801. 406/243-6213 days, 542-2563 nites.

CARS FOR SALE

FOR SALE: 1937 Buick Mod 41, frame off restoration approx. 50% finished. Included is another complete 1937 Mod 41 for parts. Other items: professionally rebuilt engine, Hampton Coach interior, 3 complete side mount fenders with covers, 7 correct wheels, 4 NIB hubcaps, NIB Harnesses Unlimited wiring harness, 4 new black-wall tires and tubes, lots of additional: brass sleeved brake cylinders, silicone brake fluid, new Burton Waldron exhaust system, rebuilt shocks, handpainted woodgrain, plus lots more including a rough 1938 Mod 48 and some 1937 Mod 81 parts.
\$5500 OBO, CURT BACKER #468 Bagley, Mn. 56621 218-694-2388

1938 Roadmaster model 87. Extremely rare; one of only four known to exist per registries of BCA and 37/38 Club. Very low initial production; only 466 made. Solid rust-free California car needing full restoration. \$3500. Call for details. Can deliver. JOHN HARTER (#849). 31696 Ave. Evita, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. 714/493-7674. (X-9)

1938 Special business coupe, model 46. Solid car. Rebuilt engine, shocks, and brakes; new wiring harness; many NOS parts. Lost storage. \$5000. JOHN KONSTANTINOS (#523). 7584 Hickory Lane, Kent, OH 44240. 216-677-4929. (X-9)

1938 Roadmaster 4-door sedan, with rare grille guard and bumper badge. This dark blue model 81 has only 2000 miles since restoration. Restoration includes, but not limited to, all new upholstery, carpet, headliner, rubber, windows, paint, reconditioned steering wheel, hand-finished woodgrain interior. Engine rebuilt and undercarriage redone, including new brakes and rebuilt front end. She purrs like a pussycat and has performed in a made-for-television mystery film. Asking only \$15,000. ROGER BAUMANN (#727). 5387 E. 39th Pl., Tulsa, OK 74135. 918/627-8421.

1937 Special model 46-C rumble seat convertible. Dark maroon body, brown leather interior. AACA Senior 1990. Ready to show \$30,000. RON DENT (#684). 1316 Sunset Ave., Pt. Pleasant, NJ 08742. 908/899-3423 after 6 PM.



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San Benito, TX 78586
512/233-9101
'38 41

William S. Murray #950
RR 1, Section 10
Timmins, Ont. P4N 7C2
Canada
705/267-3207
'37 41

Richard J. Mahnke #951
400 Williams Ave.
S.Milwaukee, WI 53172
414/762-0397
'37 41

Max Heigho #952
21130 SE 28th Pl.
Issaquah, WA 98027
206/392-2087
'38 67

David Houston #953
133 Red Oak Rd.
Asheville, NC 28804
704/252-2633
'37 41 '37 81-F

Richard Orman #954
Rt.2-Box 3705
Red Lodge, MT 59068
406/446-3437

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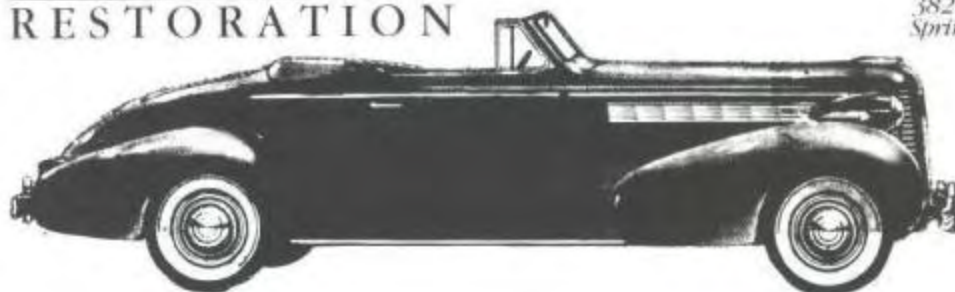
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DOOR BOTTOM SEAL
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Ser. 80-90.....TW-371.....\$29.50
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TRUNK SEAL For COUPES. 9/16" X 1"
Sponge.....TL-369.....\$2.00 ft.



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Brown.....CB-343BN.....\$5.50 ea.
Series 80-90.....CB-32BK.....\$7.50 ea.
Brown.....CB-32BN.....\$8.50 ea.



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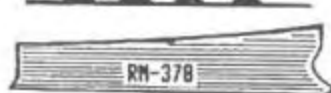
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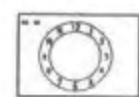
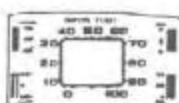
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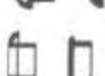
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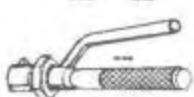
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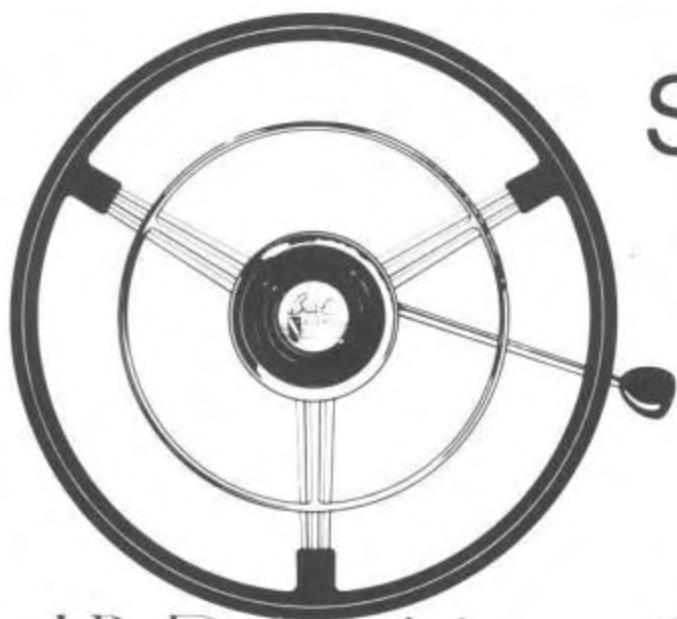


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